

75 Minutes

by Artemis Day

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Summary: Jane Foster is a vampire. The sun is not her best friend.

But if it allows her the chance to spend time with one very handsome werewolf, Jane is sure she can handle a day trip. Just as long as she gets home on time. Part of the By the Light of the Moon verse.

75 Minutes

A/N: This is a (very late) birthday gift for Vampirella. I hope you had a great one and I hope you like this fic.

* * *

><p>Jane went over her list.<p>

Wallet? Check.

Keys? Check.

Phone? Check.

Fake ID? Check.

Extra thick sunglasses? Check.

Reserve sunscreen in case of an emergency? Check.

That was everything. She was ready to go outside and hopefully not burn to death.

Not that Jane really believed in that whole 'vampires die in the sun' thing. There was no concrete evidence to back it up. The purebloods were immune, and the worst a turned vampire could expect from

prolonged exposure were some moderate burns. She had done extensive research into the known history of vampires and had yet to find even one case of a direct death by sunlight. There was always some kind of underlying cause, like a wooden bullet (that myth at least was true) or just keeling over from a particularly bad batch of blood. Jane had sat through all the old time black and white monster movies, and she would never stop rolling her eyes at Count Orlok and his dramatic death by daytime.

Nevertheless, the last thing Jane needed was another ten days on Darcy's couch getting aloe vera rubbed onto her scalded back. She set her cell phone alarm to ring in exactly sixty minutes and input the same amount of time into her wristwatch timer. A second alarm was pre-set to seventy five minutes. It had been so since the day Jane bought this phone and it would remain so until whenever Darcy convinced her to upgrade to a new model. Jane switched it on and checked the ringer volume. High pitched and piercing. Perfect.

She was ready to go.

She looked over the small shopping list. It had been taped to her door this morning, accompanied by a doodle of a smiley face. Darcy's handwriting had significantly improved since the last time, which meant that she had probably dictated the list to Ian. That new gluten free diet of theirs showed in the lack of chocolate chip muffins and whole wheat bread. Everything else had a little 'GF' scribbled next to it, including foods that never contained gluten to start with, just in case Jane forgot.

She walked under the mulberry tree growing in the next yard over. Darcy complained constantly about the berries attracting birds and vermin, but Jane had always liked that tree. The long, reaching branches were quite useful on days like this. The forecast had predicted cloudy skies all day, and by that, they must have meant partly cloudy, because as medium sized clouds came and went, the heat on Jane's skin fluctuated to the point of near pain. She pulled up her turtle neck to the base of her head. She probably looked ridiculous in this thing; the weather had yet to turn cold enough.

"Good morning, Jane," said Mrs. Nelson, the elderly lady in the house across the street. She was tending to the potted plants on her stoop, and dropped the watering can to wave at Jane.

"Morning, Mrs. Nelson," said Jane.

"I haven't seen you in a while. I was afraid you'd gotten sick."

"No Ma'am, I'm just hard at work. Night shifts and all that."

The old woman shook her head. "Not right for a young person to work in the night and sleep all day. Just look at you, honey. You're getting so pale."

There was no good way to respond to that, so it was lucky for Jane that Mrs. Nelson went right back to her begonias and forgot anyone else was there. She sung a show tune to herself that Jane could hear from the curb. She quickened her pace as the humming was replaced by the grinding of car engines. She'd deliberately chosen a less busy time of day. Rush hour traffic was miserable when some asshole got

impatient and started honking his horn, because then mob mentality kicked in and everyone else started honking their horns, and that was just a bullet to the head for someone who could hear a pin drop from two miles away.

Stupid vampire senses.

There were still a lot of cars on the road when Jane got into town. One youngish guy in a tacky red convertible was feeling especially douche-y. He'd left the top down with the most ugly rap music Jane had ever heard blasting from the speakers. He spotted her and gave a flirty wink, which Jane ignored. The light was taking its sweet time turning green, and the guy seemed to think it was worth another shot.

"Hey there, sweetie," he called out. He lifted his sunglasses up like he thought that would make him more appealing. "Feel like spending the day with a real man?"

If that was his idea of a pickup line, it was no wonder he had resort to soliciting random women off the street. Jane would've happily told him this, but the clock was ticking and there was a man coming up the street that was much more worthy of her attention. She almost didn't recognize him in the daylight, with a baseball cap on and his head down. He seemed to be texting someone, but when he glanced up to cross the street and caught her eye, there was no doubting her good fortune.

"You know what? You're right," Jane said to the man in the convertible. "I would like to spend time with a real man. Thanks for the advice."

Jane met Bucky halfway and threw her arms around him, getting up on her toes to nuzzle his neck. He had his hands on her sides, though Jane wished he would wrap them around her waist and squeeze her into him.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Oh, that guy over there thought we should hang out."

He had already driven off, sulking like an angry baby if what Jane heard before the engine kicked in was accurate. It no longer mattered, not when Bucky was finally hugging her back and using his superior strength to carry her into the shade of a restaurant awning.

"I meant what are you doing here? You know it's ten in the morning, right?"

Jane feigned a look of surprise. "Is it? And here I thought the moon was just extra bright tonight."

She started to giggle, only for Bucky to turn deathly serious.

"Jane, did you forget that you're a vampire?" He had lowered his face to the point of barely speaking. "I'm not gonna lie, that you're still standing at all is really throwing me."

"Because you've watched too many movies," Jane said. "Be careful of that guy about to walk by. I think his wristwatch might be silver."

There was no guy and Bucky didn't look. Jane wouldn't allow his sour attitude to stop her this time, and she had a good laugh at his expense. He tightened his grip on her when Jane tried to move on. Her watch timer read forty five minutes.

"If you're really that worried, don't be. I can stay out in the sun for a little while. Just long enough to get some quick grocery shopping done for Darcy and Ian. That's where I'm headed, and I'm kind of on a tight schedule."

She had already tried to break his grip, but as with the last few times, it did her little good. He had to let go on his own, which he did a moment later, albeit reluctantly.

"Fine," he said, and then started after her, "but you'll get it done faster with two people. Let me go with you."

"You don't have to do that." Jane wished she could sound more firm, but that was simply the affect Bucky Barnes had on her. There was no point in denying this overwhelmingly lust-addled side of her that wanted him around as much as possible. That was why she stopped trying ages ago.

The worst part was that she was pretty sure he could smell it on her.

"It would be my genuine pleasure," he said, smiling with those oh so enticing lips she'd been dying to taste. They seemed to say, _'It'll be your pleasure, too.' _

They wouldn't be wrong about that.

* * *

><p>"Okay, that's one pound of bananas." Jane took the bunch off the scale and put them in the cart next to the baby carrots. "I think that's it for produce."<p>

She crossed 'bananas' off the list, followed by 'russet potatoes' when a large bag of them were dropped into her line of sight.

"You know, Jane, there's something I've always wondered," Bucky said. He helpfully pushed the cart as they made their way to the canned goods. "Is it that you can eat food but have no taste for it, or you can't and trying would make you sick?"

That was a very interesting question. Jane had heard once before when Darcy interrogated her over shed re-designing. She liked how Bucky was so casual about it. Darcy used to ask questions delicately, like she was afraid of inadvertently offending her.

"Hmâ€¦ I'll put it to you this way." Jane grabbed a bag of potato chips from a display rack. "Say I ate all of these chips. I would be able to chew and swallow them like a human, but in terms of nutritional value, it would be like if you then proceeded to eat the empty bag."

Bucky cringed, and Jane had to glance away for a second because somehow, his disgusted face was just as adorable as all his other faces. How the hell was he capable of that?

"So to answer your question, it's a little of both."

"Guess we're not buying that." He plucked the chips out of her hand and threw them back onto the display. "I never liked potato chips anyway."

"Me neither," Jane said. She found the brand of tuna Darcy wanted and tossed two cans into the cart. "Pretzels were my snack food of choice."

"I like popcorn," said Bucky, licking his lips. "Lots of butter."

"You'll give yourself a heart attack."

"One, I am way too tough for that," he said with a cocky grin. "And two, I don't eat nearly enough of it. I've got a business to run and a pack to take care of. I barely have time for sleep, let alone snacking."

"Then I guess today is your day off."

Bucky frowned, and Jane didn't miss the flash of guilt in his eyes.

"Keep it to yourself, but I'm sort of playing hooky right now." He took a can of pitted olives from the very top shelf. "Today is the day when Natasha and I go over the books. It is incredibly draining work, so I took a five minute break. That wasâ€¦ about an hour ago."

"Because you just had to come and help the damsel in distress with her errands, didn't you?" Jane teased.

Bucky snaked an arm around her waist, so that her head came to rest on his chest.

"With a damsel as beautiful as you, how could I resist?"

It was a miracle that Jane didn't melt.

* * *

><p>"Did you get the marshmallows?"<p>

"Yes."

"And the gluten free bread?"

"Got it."

"And the gluten free pizzas?"

"What's with all this gluten free stuff?" Bucky checked his half of the list again before crumpling it up and shoving it into his

pocket.

"Darcy and Ian are on a new diet," Jane explained. She went over her half one more time, crossing off items as she went. "They only just started, which I think is why I had to do the shopping this time. Darcy would have gotten too tempted."

"I don't understand why they'd feel the need to go on a diet," Bucky said. "Especially Darcy. She's just fine the way she is."

Jane glared at him. If she wasn't so sure that he was just trying to mess with her, then she might-

"Hang on a second, I think we missed something."

Bucky pointed at the bottom left corner of the paper, a place Jane hadn't bothered to check while focusing on the neat column of writing in the center. There, in the tiniest letters humanly possible, 'garlic salt' was written like an afterthought. Like Darcy had forgotten to mention it to Ian while they made the list and, in her infinite wisdom, decided to just scribble it in herself without a care for those who would have to read it.

"Dammit, Darcy!" Jane crushed the paper in her fist. She checked her watch. "And I only have seven minutes before I have to start getting home."

Jane rushed around the aisles. This was the first time her friends had ever requested this kind of ingredient. She hoped whatever they were making would be the best meal ever outside of a five star restaurant. Otherwise, she'd be getting her skin burned off for nothing. She found the aisle for spices and condiments. There was only one other man shopping in this part of the store. Jane scanned the spices for the garlic salt. Unfortunately, this was not one of those stores that sorted everything alphabetically. The whole layout appeared to be as random as possible. It was ages before she happened upon the last bottle of garlic salt on the second to last row. Relief swam through her. Now she could get to the register and check out with only a minute to spare-

The other shopper grabbed the garlic salt.

Jane stared at the gap between parsley flakes and cinnamon as the man dropped the garlic salt into his very full cart and moved on. The wheels squeaked painfully on the tiles and the twenty pounds of grocery items weighing them down weren't helping.

"Wait, hang on a second!" Jane rushed to the front of his cart. "Sir, I'm sorry to bother you, but I'm in a big rush and I really need that garlic salt."

"I got it first," he drawled.

"I know you did, and believe me when I say that I wouldn't ask if it wasn't urgent, but I don't have a lot of time, and-"

"Nobody has a lot of time. If you need it that bad, go ask a worker to check the back for more. In the meantime, I have my own things to worry about without some nut bothering me."

He pushed passed her. He was a very large man and Jane was almost thrown off her feet. Strong hands caught her just in time, and instead of falling into the butter and margarine, Jane landed against a hard torso that rumbled as its owner let out a deep growl.

"Wait a second," Jane held Bucky back as he started after the man. "Hang on. Wait- Why aren't you at the checkout counter?"

He didn't answer her. He didn't seem to care about anything except going after that man and doing whatever it was he was thinking about behind those glowing gold eyes.

"Bucky, stop." Jane pushed him with all her strength, and he must have felt it because he ceased moving.

"I can't let him talk to you like that," he seethed.

"Yeah, but do you really think starting a fight in here is a good idea?"

He shrugged. "I was just gonna scare him a little."

"Just let me handle this, okay?"

Jane walked backwards, hands out to keep Bucky in place. Once she was confident that he wouldn't wolf out and go eat the guy, she turned and approached him where he had stopped in front of some cooking utensils. He was examining a fancy can opener and scoffing at the price. Jane swallowed as her watch beeped once. Five minute warning. The sound got the man's attention. He rolled his eyes and looked ready to tell Jane off, but she gave him no chance. She opened her eyes as wide as they would go, zeroing in on the point between his eyes. Power built within her, focused on the man, piercing through his meager defenses. Jane held his mind in her hand and it was one of the weakest she had ever seen. One little squeeze, and he'd be a drooling mess.

"Please give it to me!"" she intoned, her voice deep and slow and very unlike her, even to her own ears.

The man's eyes were almost shut as he felt around in his cart and withdrew the garlic salt. Obediently, he placed it into her outstretched hand. Jane shoved it into her pocket and tore her eyes away, breaking the spell. She'd have only a few seconds before he came back to his senses. She ran back to Bucky and grabbed him and the cart, pulling them into an aisle.

"Come on. We have to get all of this paid for in the next three minutes."

She swerved around a woman with a toddler, grazing her and making her drop a box of pancake mix in surprise. Bucky caught it without looking and dropped it into her cart, and it was hard to tell which of them the mother was gaping after.

"What did you do to that guy?" Bucky asked as he swept all their items up into his arms and dropped them on the conveyor belt. The apathetic checkout guy rang them up while reading a magazine.

"Just a little trick," Jane said. "You don't need to be after blood

to make use of it sometimes."

* * *

><p>It turned out the some of the produce didn't have proper labels on them, which required the checkout guy to call his manager for a price check. The manager took his sweet time coming over, and by the time everything was paid for and they could leave, Jane's sixty minute alarm had long since gone off, and her watch timer had winded down to just over eight minutes.<p>

"Oh, this is not good. This is really not good."

Jane tapped the watch, as if that would turn back the clock and give her the time she needed.

"What's wrong?" Bucky asked. He had insisted on carrying all the bags by himself and one of them brushed Jane's leg as he looked over her shoulder.

"It takes me ten minutes to walk home from here. I always give myself an extra five just in case, but those idiots took so damn long that I lost those five minutes _and_ two more that I really needed." Jane sunk against the wall and sighed. "Guess that's another ten days of aloe vera for me."

She wallowed in self-pity, losing another full minute in the process. Bucky kept to her side, a mountain of shopping bags wrapped around his wrists. He didn't give her any sort of pep talk or try to rush her along, which was weird because she would have expected at least one of those reactions from him. Dropping all the bags to take his shoes and socks off and shove them into his pocketsâ€| that was different.

"Come on," he said. He then disappeared around the corner, and Jane had no choice but to follow him. He was carrying sixty dollars' worth of groceries that _she_ had paid for.

She found him halfway into the dark shadows of an empty alley, down on one knee and facing the wall.

"Hop on."

Jane stared blankly. "Excuse me?"

"Don't be shy, just get on my back."

"Why would I do that?"

"Because if you don't you'll burn to a crisp, now get over here and climb on my back. I really don't want to do this the caveman way with you over my shoulder, but I will if I have to."

Jane looked behind her. There was no one around except some people on phones and store owners too busy opening shop to notice two weirdos in an alley. Whatever Bucky was planning couldn't possibly be something that would expose them anyway. An Alpha like him would be much too smart for that. The five minute warning bell on Jane's phone was the final selling point. She snaked her arms around his neck, maneuvering her legs around his waist at his direction.

"Okay, hold on tight," he said.

"I am."

"A little tighter." Jane obliged. "Tighter- no, no, too tight! Looser!"

"Sorry! Sorry!"

"It's okay. Just keep it like that. That's perfect."

He drew himself up. Jane was by no means a big girl, but she couldn't help but marvel at how effortless it was. He didn't even stumble.

"So not that I'm complaining, but is there a reason why I'm on your back in the middle of an alley?"

"Oh yeah, there's a very good reason," he said. "Give me a second."

She was about to ask what for, but then he closed his eye, bared his teeth, and let out a growl that put the one she heard earlier to shame. His entire body seemed to vibrate with the force of it. Jane stiffened, burying her face into his neck as he seemed to grow taller. She was lifted another few inches off the ground. Bones snapped and cracked, the sounds hitting Jane straight in the pit of her stomach. She peeked over the mess of his hair at a pair of long and furry black paws coming out of his jeans. Claws dug into the gravel. It sunk under his weight as he bent low.

"Hang on," he said, and that was all the warning Jane had before he took off.

With her face in his neck, Jane was saved from the worst of it, but wind screamed in her ears and hair whipped painfully at her cheeks. If only she'd thought to tie it back. Sharp turns this way and that would have made her vomit were she a human. If this was that idiot who wrote Twilight called romantic, then she was even more clueless than Jane had imagined (and that was saying something). Bucky ran so fast, Jane couldn't even hear his footfalls, just a low and steady hum like a speeding heartbeat. She was fairly certain that he'd let her down, and she would find blood gushing from ten finger shaped holes in his collar.

When they did slow to a halt, Jane fell off of him with all the poise of a rag doll. She lay in a heap on the driveway, eyes on the sky and just barely catching the top of Darcy and Ian's house. Her watch beeped at four minutes.

"Got you back with time to spare," Bucky said. He shifted all the bags to one hand and helped her up. Jane's legs wobbled like jelly, necessitating his continued assistance in getting her through the backyard to the safety of her apartment.

"What was that?" Jane coughed. Her mind was swimming and while she had much more that she wanted to say, those three words were all she could manage.

Bucky shrugged. "I'm a werewolf. We're fast. It comes in handy at times like this."

"Yeah, well, maybe a little warning next time would be nice?"

"I did tell you to hang on tight."

They were moving too slow for Jane's liking. Bucky's, too, as he left the bags on the grass and carried her bridal style to the door. Jane unlocked it and he kicked it open. The cool darkness washed over Jane, relaxing and re-energizing her; filling her like a breath of fresh air to the lungs. Every time she had to go out in the day, it never hit her how draining it was until she was home. Her weakened body made movement of any kind a chore, and she craved the healing blackness of night to restore her strength.

"I hate the sun," she muttered.

"I can't say I'm a morning person either," said Bucky.

"Don't get cute." Jane collapsed onto the couch, head resting on a pillow Bucky snatched from her bed. "I'm still mad at you."

"For what? Getting you home on time?"

Jane rolled over, pointedly facing away from him.

"Okay, you're right. I should have explained it to you first. I'm sorry."

Jane moaned and rolled again onto her back. He was standing over her, so close that Jane definitely should have heard him, and that she didn't was really annoying. His pockets were empty, too. She couldn't even blame it on his bare feet.

"You're forgiven for now," she said. "Let's kiss and make up."

That had been a joke, and not even one she meant to voice aloud. Just the usual wishful thinking he inspired in her. It must have been pure luck that the one time Jane's mouth betrayed her was during her most innocent of fantasies (because if he knew about the stuff she regularly imagined doing with him...). The thought of him getting to one knee like he was doing, and looking at her as if nothing else mattered like he was doing, and putting his arm under her neck to lift her up like he was doing, and moving closer and closer to her faceâ€¦

Someone knocked on the door frame. They couldn't knock on the door, because Jane had stupidly left it wide open. Not that closing it would have prevented visitors from coming, but at least if they were quiet, they could have pretended that no one was home and hoped they would go away eventually.

Not that this particular guest would have bought it.

"Barnes, what are you doing?" Natasha Romanov entered uninvited, her boots clacking on the wooden floors well within Jane's earshot. "You said you were taking a five minute walk two hours ago."

"And you said that you and Clint would stop using the private shower

in my office for personal time," said Bucky. "I guess we're all a bunch of liars here."

A lesser woman would have broken down into a nervous and stammering wreck at the accusation. Natasha Romanov would most likely have eaten her.

"What Clint and I do together has nothing to do with making sure we aren't operating in the red," she said.

"Which we never are. It can wait a day, Natasha. Jane here needed my help."

"I can see that," Natasha said.

With the position they were in, it was easy to for an outsider to jump to conclusions. Jane couldn't even deny it because it was more or less true and Natasha was the kind of person who stared into your soul and then ripped it apart without remorse if you lied to her. Not to besmirch Bucky's pride, but sometimes, she wondered how he had ever defeated her to become the Alpha.

"How did you even know I was here?" Bucky asked, hands on his hips.

"I could smell you from a mile away. I think Jane brings out the romantic in you. Not that that's a bad thing."

"Jesus, Nat, you have got to stop trying to set everybody up. First it's Wanda and that computer guy, now me?"

"At least I didn't have to find her for you." Natasha turned to Jane, her gaze softening. "I hope he wasn't too much trouble."

"He never is," Jane said. She sat up to fluff her pillow, happily accepting the second one Natasha offered.

"Glad to see that somebody thinks so," Natasha said.

"Watch it," Bucky snapped.

Natasha smiled at Jane and backed out of the shed without a care for her Alpha's ire.

"So what do you plan to do with those shopping bags?" she asked.

Bucky turned to Jane.

"The spare key is under the welcome mat."

"We'll bring them inside," Bucky told his second. "We'll put the perishable stuff away and leave the rest for Jane's friends to deal with."

"You don't think that's rude?"

"Hey, we don't work for them." Bucky took a step backwards away from the exit. "Give me a minute and I'll be right there."

He didn't wait for Natasha's response. He returned to Jane with heat in his eyes. He took her in his arms and kissed her more thoroughly than Jane had ever in her life been kissed. His large body pressed her into the cushions, cutting off all means of escape. As if Jane would have wanted to. She eagerly kissed back, his shirt bunched in his hands as she dragged him closer.

Their embrace could have lasted for hours and it wouldn't be enough for Jane. She felt cold in the worst of ways when he had to let go.

"I'll call you later, and we'll talk about meeting up," he said.

"Sounds good," Jane wanted to say. It came out more like, "Ah-huhâ€|"

She could hear him and Natasha bringing the bags into the house and then locking the front door again a minute later. They walked up the street arguing about rising costs of maintenance workers and getting the bar's license renewed. Long after they were gone, her lips still tingled, and her insides were on fire, and goddammit, Darcy was going to know what had happened the minute she saw her.

'Oh well,' Jane thought as she curled up on the couch. The pillow still smelled like him. _'Nothing I can do about it.'_

She settled down for some well-deserved sleep. Her dreams that day were full of rough fingers and soft lips trailing down her body.

End
file.